

SENATE FISH AND GAME
EXHIBIT NO. 45
DATE Jan. 20, 2009
BILL NO. SB 202

Senate Bill 202
January 20, 2009
Presented by Ken McDonald
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Ken McDonald, Wildlife Division Administrator of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

Senate Bill 202 adds ungulates and mountain lions to the list of species people are prohibited from knowingly feeding. FWP supports this bill.

To our knowledge, feeding of mountain lions to any extent rarely if ever occurs, so we see this provision as more of a proactive measure to make it clear it should not occur.

FWP is especially supportive of prohibiting feeding or purposely attracting ungulates with feed attractants.

Feeding of ungulates, particularly deer and elk, may result in artificial concentrations of these animals. This in turn increases the potential for disease transmission such as brucellosis and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), and may affect population management depending on the time and place where the feeding/attracting is occurring. Attracting these animals by one landowner may also cause undesirable impacts on neighboring landowners depending on the scale and magnitude of the feeding – whether in agricultural settings or urban environments. This is one of the conflicts in the Helena Urban Deer issue – one neighbor is feeding and attracting deer, while the other is affected by the number and frequency of deer in his yard.

FWP sees this bill as a proactive measure that will help reduce artificial concentrations of ungulates, and the consequences of that in helping to alleviate problems among neighbors resulting from one or more feeding these animals. This is also consistent with FWP's CWD plan.

FWP supports Senate Bill 202 and is ready to answer any questions you might have regarding this topic.